

In the Claims

Please amend Claims 1-4, 8, and 9.

1. (Amended) A method for detecting the presence or absence of a prokaryotic microorganism in a sample, the method comprising the steps of:
- a) contacting a test sample with a substrate specific for a protease that is unique to a prokaryotic microorganism; and
 - b) detecting cleavage of the substrate or absence of cleavage of the substrate, wherein cleavage of the substrate is indicative of the presence of the prokaryotic microorganism in the sample, and absence of cleavage of the substrate is indicative of the absence of the prokaryotic microorganism in the sample.
2. (Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the quenched label is selected from the group consisting of fluorescent label and a colorimetric label.
3. (Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the cleavage is detected using a colorimeter or fluorimeter.
4. (Amended) A method for detecting a plurality of pathogenic microorganisms in a sample, the method comprising the steps of:
- a) contacting a test sample with a substrate specific for a protease that is unique to a pathogenic microorganism; and
 - b) detecting cleavage of the substrate or absence of cleavage of the substrate, wherein cleavage of the substrate is indicative of the presence of the pathogenic microorganism in the sample, and absence of cleavage of the substrate is indicative of the absence of the pathogenic microorganism in the sample.

8. (Amended) A sensor for detection of a microbial pathogen in a sample, said sensor comprising packaging material having a first side proximal to said sample and having a second side; and having a detectably labeled substrate specific for a protease produced by said microbial pathogen attached to said first side.
9. (Amended) A method for using an alpha-crystallin type protein comprising the steps of:
- a) expressing and purifying the recombinant alpha-crystallin type protein; and
 - b) adding the alpha-crystallin type protein to a solid phase or a liquid phase assay containing a dye labeled peptide in an amount sufficient to reduce proteolysis of said dye labeled peptide.

Amendments to the claims are indicated in the attached "Marked Up Version of Amendments" (pages i - ii).

Please add new Claims 10-16.

10. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the substrate is labeled with a quenched label.
11. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the prokaryotic microorganism is *Listeria monocytogenes*.
12. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the protease is a metalloprotease.
13. (New) The method of claim 4 wherein the substrate is labeled with a quenched label.
14. (New) The method of claim 13 wherein the quenched label is selected from the group consisting of fluorescent label and a colorimetric label.